

# **MALPAS**

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### **IN THE MARCHES**



**David Hayns**

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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Front cover Malpas parish church of St Oswald, taken from the Goodmoors south-east of the town. Title page Picture postcard showing Malpas High Street in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

# MALPAS

## CHESHIRE'S TOWN IN THE MARCHES

### EARLY DAYS

The present day town of Malpas straddles the line of the former Roman military road from Hadrian's Wall, via Chester (Deva), Whitchurch (Mediolanum) and Wroxeter (Uriconium), to Richborough (Rutupiae) in Kent. Malpas itself is an early medieval settlement which came into being soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The name comes from the Norman French *mal-pas*, meaning 'bad/difficult road'. It was the central township for an extensive ancient parish comprising twenty-five townships in all. The town itself lies roughly in the same area as the former Saxon settlement of Depenbech, which is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is an early 'planned town' which developed rapidly in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and is similar to others in the Welsh borderland region known as the 'Marches', towns such as Bishop's Castle, Clun and Ludlow. In these places the local lords were permitted by their Norman overlords to build castles; to hold markets and fairs at which they could collect tolls from traders; and to divide the town into 'burgage' plots, which they rented to the local populace. In return for these privileges they were expected to keep the peace in the Marches and to defend the area against the marauding Welsh.

Around 1300 a request was made to allow the rites of baptism and burial to be celebrated at Cholmondeley Chapel (Cholmondeley was one of the Malpas townships) because '*... the dead in time of war are buried in the fields, because the church of Malpas is so near Wales that part of the parish belongs to the Welsh and part to the English. Wherefore the English dare not go with their dead to the said church of Malpas in time of war [with the Welsh]. And likewise at one time it happened that no Englishman dared to come to the said parish church on Easter day to receive the body of Christ for fear of the Welsh*'. A court case around 1370 concerned '*Madok ap Gruffyd ap Jorweth ap Atha, Yollyn ap Dogan, Tolla*

*ap Meillour* who, accompanied by five others with equally Welsh-sounding names, ‘... came to Cheshire from Flintshire, with armed force, and assaulted John Rathebon with drawn bows and arrows at Agden (another Malpas township) against the peace on Monday 22 October 1369, and seized Margery, the widow of David Caderout, who was in John’s company, against her will and abducted her into Flintshire’.

In 1281 King Edward 1<sup>st</sup> granted a charter to ‘Philip Burnel and to Isabel, his wife, that they and their heirs shall have for ever a weekly market on Mondays at their manor of Maupus in the county of Chester, and a fair in the same place to last for three days each year’. The Cross, possibly with some of its medieval steps surviving but now surmounted by a memorial to a Victorian rector, is a reminder of the weekly market and the livestock fairs that were held here until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



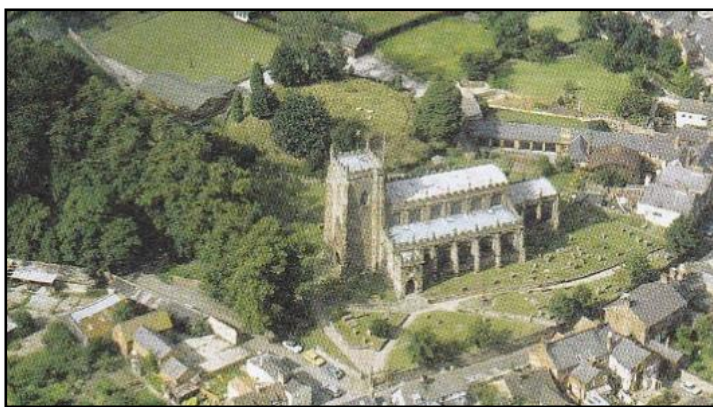
Looking past the market cross into the area of Church Street where the market would have been held

## **CHURCH, CASTLE AND BARONY**

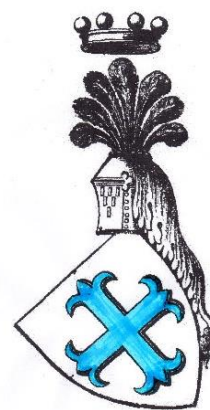
The impressive 14<sup>th</sup> century parish church, dedicated to Saint Oswald, probably had its origin as the private chapel to the castle, for which the only surviving evidence is the massive mound or *motte* adjacent to the

church. Enlarged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when it received its magnificent roof with painted and gilded ceiling, the church served the large ecclesiastical parish of Malpas until it became divided into five smaller ecclesiastical parishes (Malpas, Bickerton, Bickley, Tushingham-cum-Grindley and Whitewell) during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The motte may not be entirely in its original form since it contains a reservoir constructed in the 1830s, at the expense of the Drake and Cholmondeley families, as part of a scheme to provide Malpas with its first piped water supply. The metal dome in the road by the Cross covers a valve which was also part of this scheme. On the motte would have been the wooden castle keep, and the boundaries of the present churchyard are probably the same as those of the castle's outer section or *bailey*. The castle was the headquarters of the large and powerful Barony of Malpas, originally granted by the Earl of Chester to his bastard son Robert fitzHugh, not long after the Norman Conquest.



Malpas church and the castle motte  
(Nick Higham)



The arms of the  
Barony of Malpas

Among the privileges granted to the Malpas barons was the right to summarily execute wrongdoers. They also had the right to nominate the Rector of Malpas and, possibly owing to a divided inheritance between two female successors, Malpas became one of the few parishes to have two rectors. However, local legend has a more colourful explanation for the divided rectory. King John is supposed to have visited the town while

travelling incognito. The rector at that time is reported to have been slack in his hospitality, with the result that the king split the living and granted the second part to the curate, making him a second rector. The two clergymen were known as the 'Higher' and 'Lower' rectors, the Higher Rectory being close to the church yard and the Lower Rectory further down Church Street. The livings were re-combined in 1885 and today's rector lives in a modern house, built within the grounds of the former Higher Rectory. Both of the former rectories survive as private residences.



Former Lower Rectory in early 1900s



Former Higher Rectory in 1800s



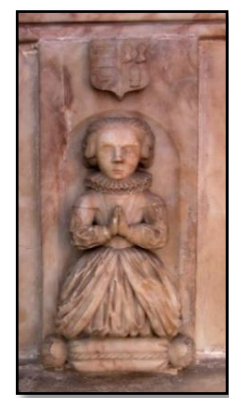
Saint Oswald's church from the S.E.  
(Barry Sutcliffe)



Angel with the cockleshell of  
St James (nave roof)

The greater portion of the Barony passed eventually to the Brereton family, the rest being mainly in the hands of the Cholmondeleys, with a smaller portion going to the Egertons. The Brereton and Cholmondeley families are represented by two superb alabaster chest tombs in the church. They are located in the Cholmondeley and Brereton chapels at the east ends of the north and south aisles, respectively. One of the children

depicted on the Brereton tomb, which commemorates Sir Randle (died 1530) and Eleanor Brereton, is William, the sixth son, who became Groom of the Privy Chamber to Henry VIII and accumulated considerable possessions in Cheshire and the Marches. It may have been jealousy on the part of his enemies at Court which led to him being falsely accused, along with others, of adultery with Anne Boleyn. He was executed on Tower Hill in May 1536. He appears as a character in Hilary Mantel's prize-winning novels *Wolf Hall* (2010) and *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012).



L to R: The first Grammar School master, depicted on the Brereton tomb – Effigies of Sir Randal and Lady Eleanor Brereton on the Brereton tomb – Child of Sir Hugh (died 1596) and Mary Cholmondeley depicted on the side of their chest tomb

## THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

The Breretons were involved also with the founding of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Malpas Grammar School, originally financed partly from the revenues of the salt works in the nearby hamlets of Higher and Lower Wych. The school, where until the 18<sup>th</sup> century all the teaching would have been in Latin, survived until 1903. During the Civil Wars the salt works were destroyed by Parliamentary soldiers, from the garrison at Nantwich, who slept overnight in Malpas church. The Brereton tomb escaped damage at their hands because the Parliamentary commander in Cheshire was Sir William Brereton, of the Handforth branch of the family. The only Civil War actions of any consequence in the area took place in 1644. In July of that year Cholmondeley House, a Royalist garrison, was assaulted and taken by Brereton's Nantwich forces and the next month they completely



routed the Royalist troops camped on Oldcastle Heath, about two miles from Malpas, killing over sixty of them. In 1636 Sir Thomas Brereton, a descendant of Sir Randle, founded and endowed one of the two sets of Malpas almshouses, intended originally to house poor elderly persons. Lord Cholmondeley had them rebuilt in 1721. They were subsequently remodelled, in 1955 into four dwellings, then in 2001 into the two dwellings in Church Street now known as Cholmondeley Terrace. The six Wigfield almshouses in Chester Road were endowed in 1854 by the Reverend Henry Wigfield of Bickerton. They too have recently been remodelled into four dwellings.



*Cholmondeley Terrace*



*Wigfield Terrace*

Another local family which felt the effects of the Civil Wars was the Alports of nearby Overton Hall. Richard Alport, a Royalist, fell into debt by lending money to support the King, had his estates confiscated by the Parliamentarians, and was sent to London's Fleet prison. On his release in 1648 he came back to a ruined and plundered house. Today it is restored as a substantial residence which, until fairly recently, was the house for a farm renowned for the quality of its Cheshire cheese.



The centre building of this group is the original 1745 Alport School



Final home of the Grammar School (Church Street)

It was Richard Alport's grandson, another Richard, who in his will left £500 to endow a Bluecoat charity school in Malpas. The school opened in 1745 and the present primary school is still known as the Alport Endowed School, although the original 18<sup>th</sup> century school building in Tilston Road has been converted for domestic use.

Although Malpas would originally have had many timber-framed buildings, today few black and white 'magpie' houses survive. Those that do, such as *Bank Cottage*, *The Nest* and *Tudor Cottage* in Old Hall Street, and *The Griffon* (previously called *Church View*), *Old Glebe Farmhouse* and the *Tithe Barn* (converted into a house in the 1950s) in Church Street, date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. *Holly Cottage*, next door to the *Tithe Barn*, is a modern residence (1994) built partly by using traditional timber framed construction methods.



*Old Glebe Farmhouse*



*Bank Cottage*



*The Nest*



*Tudor Cottage*

## GEORGIAN AND VICTORIAN MALPAS

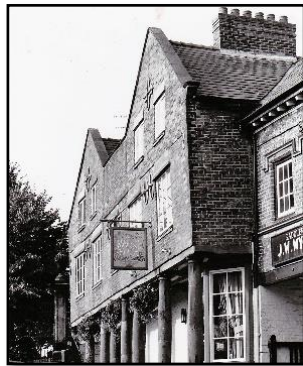
The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were a period of great development for the town. In the later 17<sup>th</sup> century the Drake family, from Buckinghamshire, had purchased the Brereton share of the Barony.



*The Old Printing House*



*Woodville*



*The Market House*



*Prospect House (in early 1900s)*

Together with the Cholmondeleys, the Drakes (later to become the Tyrwhitt-Drakes) were responsible for building some of the prominent Georgian buildings such as the *Old Printing House* (1733) and *The Market House* (1762) in Church Street, and *Woodville* (1765?) in Tilston Road. The *Market House*, built originally as two residences or shops, has served over the years as private residences, various types of shop and as a restaurant (but never as a market hall). It has a verandah supported by eight classical columns. Until about 1850 this was the site of the butter market, where the verandah protected the butter and other dairy products from the hot sun. Some of the new buildings helped to fill in what had been a large cobbled market place stretching from the church steps down to the High Street, which in those days was called Windmill Street. *Prospect House*

was built in the 1790s as a new home for the Grammar School. Originally it had a 'prospect' or viewing platform on top of the roof.



The Red Lion and some former inns - clockwise from top left:  
*The Red Lion - The Wyvern - The Angel - The Griffon*

Malpas became an important coaching stop for travellers from Chester to London and Shrewsbury, who would call for refreshments at the (*Red*) *Lion* inn (originally timber framed but with new frontages added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and again in the 1920s). Other inns, of which the buildings are still standing, included the *Crown Hotel* and, all in Church Street, the *Wyvern*, the *Angel*, the *Griffon* and *The (Spirit) Vaults*. Of these, the *Crown* and the *Vaults* are still in business; the *Wyvern* survived as a licensed establishment into the middle of the twentieth century; and the other two closed as inns during the Victorian era. The town also had its own workhouse, where the entrance to Old Hall Court is today, and later a set

of ten or eleven 'pauper' cottages were built on the site where the garage (currently closed) now stands.

In 1783 Reginald Heber was born in the Higher Rectory, which had been built by his father. Reginald became famous both as a hymn writer (his hymns include '*Holy, Holy, Holy*' and '*Brightest and best of the sons of the morning*') and as a missionary during the last three years of his life, when he was Bishop of Calcutta. He is commemorated in Malpas by the east window in Saint Oswald's church, by the Bishop Heber High School and by the road named 'Heber Close'.



Panels in the east window of Malpas church showing scenes from the life of Reginald Heber

In 1833 an infant school was founded and housed in a new wing built onto the original Alport School in Tilston Road. In 1874 this school moved into a new purpose-built building, which is now the Alport School annexe housing the Barika pre-school and an after-school club. The Alport School itself in 1889 moved out of its original building into a new building, in Chester Road, financed by local philanthropist Joseph Lewis (who also built *The Beeches* in Tilston Road as a home for himself).

In the 1840s Malpas Grammar School moved from *Prospect House* into new premises in Church Street, where it finally closed in 1903. *Woodville*, next door to *Prospect House*, which had originally been the home of the Drake estate's land agent, became another private school, which lasted

well into the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century *Prospect House* became the local doctors' surgery, now moved into modern premises in Old Hall Street. *Prospect House* and *Woodville* have recently been combined to form the expanded Prospect House nursing home.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought many changes and developments resulting from legislation and new social movements during the Victorian era, including: low cost housing for the working classes (*Rock Terrace*, in the High Street, and *Oathills Cottages*); a gas works opened in 1862 (now the location of Saint George's Rise off Well Street); sewers; a new piped water supply, connected to the Lake Vyrnwy-Liverpool aqueduct; a fire service (the first fire engine house, dating from the 1830s, stood alongside the Jubilee Hall); a police station; new nonconformist chapels; a civil cemetery (1875); the development of sporting activities (cricket, football, billiards); the erection of the Jubilee Hall to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887; the formation of the Parish Council in 1894; and the new building for the Alport School.



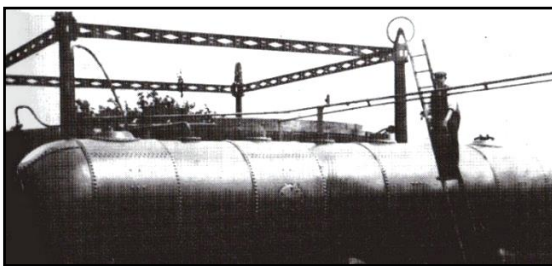
*The Beeches*  
built by Joseph Lewis c.1884



Joseph Lewis  
(Jubilee Hall)



*Oathills Cottages* built by  
Joseph Lewis in 1884



Gas works in Well Street (Bill Coffin)

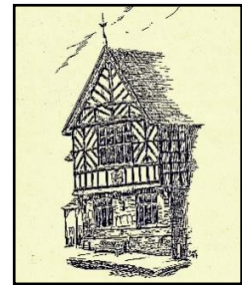


1889 Alport School



L: The civil cemetery in Chester Road R: The Malpas fire engine returning from Whitchurch station in 1902 carrying soldiers coming home from the South African War

Of the nonconformist chapels, the Primitive Methodist chapel (1894) in Wrexham Road is now converted into a residence; the Wesleyan Methodist chapel (1892) in Old Hall Street has been demolished and replaced by the five houses known as *Chapel Rise* (although the former chapel stables remain, converted into garages); and the Congregational chapel (1862) was demolished and replaced in 1995 by the modern High Street Church (now combined United Reformed Church/Methodist).



L to R: Opening of Congregational chapel (1862)  
Wesleyan Methodist chapel (built 1892)  
The Victoria Jubilee Hall (1888) drawn by Peter Field in 1987

Malpas has always been at the centre of an important agricultural community. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it had its own Agricultural Society, which held annual shows on the large fields north of Church Street known as the Ox Heyes (meaning ‘ox enclosure’, where in medieval times the oxen used for ploughing were kept). The Ox Heyes were also used for other events, such as festivities to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and an open-air rally in 1902, attended by over 1,300 from all the churches in the town, which was addressed by the famous travelling evangelist ‘Gypsy’ Smith. The sycamores (some of which have

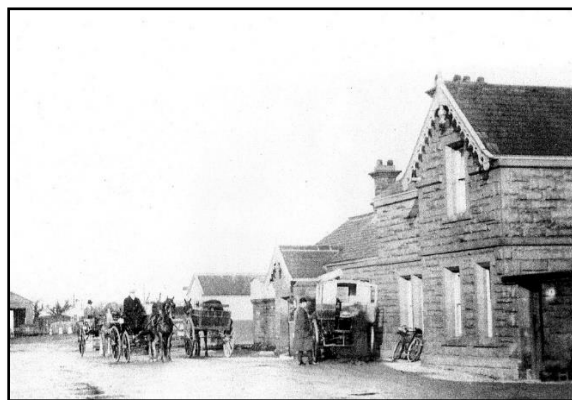
had to be replaced over the years) which mark the line of the footpath across the Ox Heyes are said to have been planted in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by Reginald Heber's mother, to represent the twelve Apostles.

From the sixteenth century, dairy farming and cheese-making had developed as a very important part of Cheshire's agricultural economy. H.S. Bourne at Bank Farm, just outside Malpas, is one of the very few farms which still produce prize-winning Cheshire cheese.



Malpas farmhouses (L to R): *Overton Manor* (c.1711)  
*The Old Hall* (c.1760 – now a retirement home) – *Mount View Farm* (18<sup>th</sup> century)

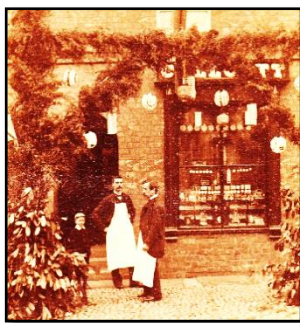
During the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dairying started on a general decline after years of difficulty for farmers who, among many other setbacks, had been hit by two major epidemics of foot-and-mouth disease (1967, 2001) and the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis of 1986-8. The number of dairy herds in the county has fallen significantly; some farmhouses and their outbuildings have been converted for non-agricultural residential use; and many farmers have adopted various forms of diversification to supplement their incomes.



Malpas station in the 1930s



The Tattenhall Junction to Whitchurch branch of the London & North Western Railway reached Malpas, or rather Hampton (although the station is actually in Edge) in 1872 and an important livestock market grew up close to the station. The railway line was closed for passenger traffic in 1957 but continued carrying goods traffic until 1963. Soon afterwards the track was taken up and most of the route reverted to farmland, although the station still exists, converted into offices. The former station yard is now part of the Hampton Industrial Estate, developed from late last century. The livestock market survived until 1989, being served by road transport in its final years, and its site is now the location of the small housing development known as *Market Place*.



L to R: Callcott the clock & watchmaker in High Street (1897) – now a barber's shop  
Furber's smithy in Old Hall Street (early 1900s)  
*Pet Stop* – High Street (Victorian shop front)

In the town itself, during the Victorian era many new shops opened on the High Street, most of them still in use as retail businesses (the Co-operative is in the premises which originally housed Salt's grocery store and Huxley's shop occupies the former premises of Morgan's outfitters). The garage in Old Hall Street is on the site of Furber's smithy, which evolved into the town's first garage as horses were gradually replaced by motor vehicles. To look after the health of residents and livestock, there have been a doctors' surgery and veterinary practices since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



The High Street in 1924. Coming down from the Jubilee Hall, on the right, are the former Post Office (Beech House), Salt's grocery shop and Walker the chemist.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw many further changes in the town. In 1934 a new fire station was opened in the High Street, and a new police station and house in Chester Road in the late 1930s. This replaced the Victorian police station, now demolished, at the junction of High Street and Chester Road.



The 1934 fire station – now a café



Police station and house (late 1930s)

At Sunnyside in 1906 Malpas Rural District Council built twelve of the earliest rural local authority houses in the whole country, with more houses built in the 1920s and 1930s. Tarvin Rural District Council, which absorbed Malpas Rural District in 1936, started to develop the Springfield estate in 1947.



1906 Local Authority housing  
(Sunnyside)



1940s Local Authority housing  
(Springfield Road)



Pre. WW2 private housing  
Chester Road



1970s private housing  
Oathills

There were a number of large privately owned detached houses built, particularly in Chester Road, between the two World Wars. From the 1950s private housing estates were developed on the edge of the town (Well Farm, Oathills and Hollowood Road, Greenfields).

During the two World Wars some local buildings had been used for emergency purposes. In WW1 the former *Lower Rectory* (then known as *The Bolling*) in Church Street was used as a Red Cross hospital for wounded soldiers. In WW2 *The Hollies* in Old Hall Street became a hostel for Land Army Girls; *The Beeches* in Tilston Road was used as a hostel for

children evacuated from Liverpool and London; the buildings in Church Street, built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as racing stables which in the 1950s became the house known as *Cobblestones*, were used at various times to accommodate voluntary farm workers, RAF personnel, and Italian prisoners-of-war; and the *Bolling Cottage* (now called *Cobblestones Cottage*) was the headquarters for the local Home Guard.

Following the 1902 Education Act, which established Cheshire County Council as the Local Education Authority, the Alport became a state 'all-age' (junior and secondary) school, until the senior pupils were moved to the newly built Malpas County Secondary School in 1960. Following this change, the formerly independent Church of England infant school was merged with the junior school to form the Malpas Alport Primary School, which has added new buildings over the past two decades. In 1971, following the introduction of comprehensive secondary education into Cheshire, the secondary school was merged with the former Tattenhall Secondary School to form the comprehensive school, now known as the Bishop Heber High School, on the Malpas site.

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the town expanded considerably. As well as remaining home for many long established local families, Malpas has become a commuter dormitory, and a much sought after retirement area. In 1946 the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Fathers bought *The Beeches* for use as a training college for priests and in 1950 converted one of the outbuildings into the first Roman Catholic church for Malpas (St Joseph's). The Fathers sold *The Beeches* in 2006 and in 2013 the church was closed. During the century, Malpas developed further recreational and sporting facilities. The Recreation Ground in Tilston Road, managed by a charitable trust, is on a field given to the people of Malpas in 1938 by John Douglas Greenshields of *The Beeches*. In 1980 the Malpas Men's Institute amalgamated with the Bowling Club and built a new pavilion beside the bowling green alongside the castle hill. Formerly there had also been a bowling green actually on the top of the castle hill. Nearby, the Malpas Farmers' Club had opened its bowling green and

pavilion in 1959. Malpas Sports Club in Wrexham Road, which now caters for football, cricket, tennis, crown green bowling, snooker and other sports was opened in 1958. Further sporting facilities are provided at the Bishop Heber High School, which has a large sports hall and an all-weather pitch.



The Recreation Ground



Malpas Farmers Club



Malpas Sports Club

Housing for older persons had been developed since 1950 in Old Hall Street and Springfield Road. *Craddock Court*, providing sheltered housing, was opened in 1992. *Prospect House*, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a grammar school then becoming a doctors' surgery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is now a busy nursing home. The *Old Hall*, formerly a farm house, has become a retirement home.



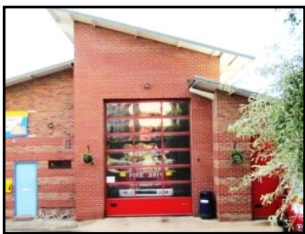
Old Hall Street bungalows



Craddock Court

## INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In 2000 a new fire station was opened in Chester Road, replacing the 1934 fire station in the High Street, which has been converted into a café. The Young Persons' Centre, by the new fire station car park, was opened in 2003. Many other older buildings have been converted and restored to accommodate both local families and newcomers. Building of new houses continues, including the twelve terraced residences known as *Brockbank* in Tilston Road, which were built as affordable housing in conjunction with a re-development plan for *The Beeches*.



Fire Station (2000)



Young Persons' Centre (2003)



'Brockbank' (2011)

Malpas continues to grow and flourish. As well as retaining three pubs, the town has a restaurant, a café, a teashop and two takeaways, in addition to a post office, a bank and a wide range of other shops and services, including a modern GP surgery, a pharmacy, a dentist, an optician and a veterinary centre. Although the town still has a fire station and retained fire brigade it no longer has a police station or resident police officer. There are numerous voluntary clubs and societies, catering for a

wide variety of interests. From the time of its birth as a medieval borough and market town until the present day, the town has been and still is an important rural centre, a very pleasant place to live, work, worship, and be educated, and is a focus for many social and sporting activities.



Mount View (Wrexham Road)



Battarbee Bank (Wrexham Road)



Depenbech Rise

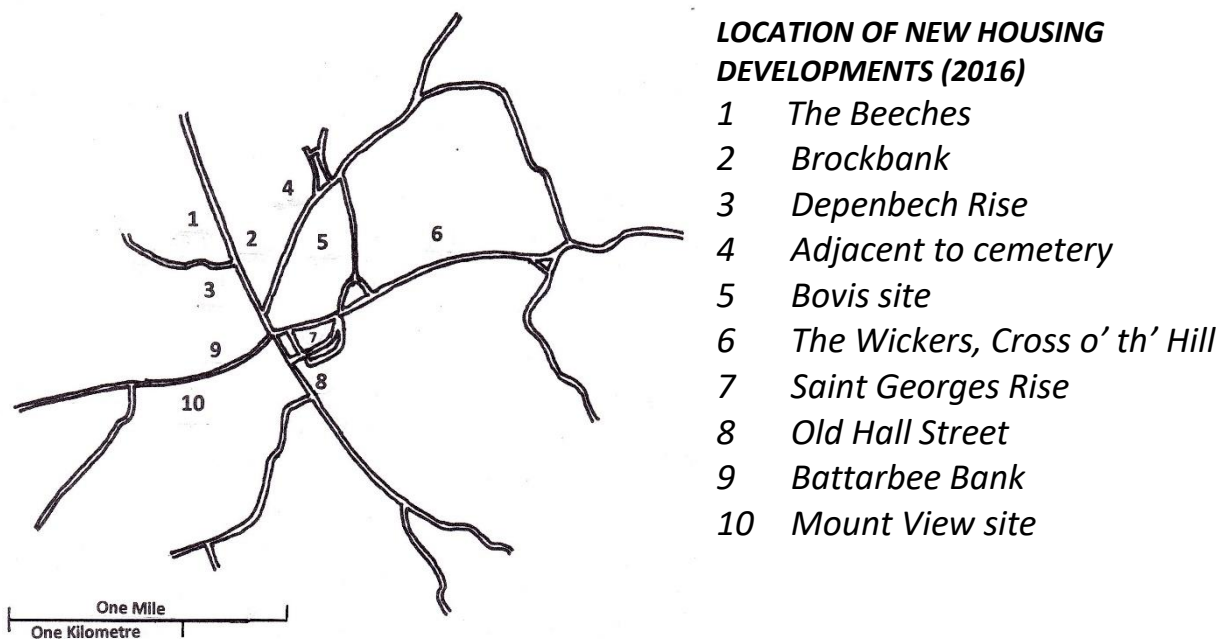


Beeches Close

A SELECTION OF RECENT BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS IN MALPAS (JULY 2016)

At the time of writing (2016) Malpas, like many communities across the country, is experiencing an unprecedented wave of building development. This is largely as a result of the local authority (Cheshire West & Chester Council) responding to the government's concerns about a national shortage of housing. Planning laws have been relaxed, allowing developers to proceed with schemes which they may have had 'on hold' for a number of years. Schemes which have been completed since 2000, have been recently started, or are proposed for a start in the near future are: *The Beeches* and *Brockbank*, both in Tilston Road; *Depenbech Rise* (Stewart Milne Homes), on the site of the former West End Poultry Farm;

*Saint Georges Rise* (off Well Street); on fields between Chester Road and Well Meadow (Bovis); two developments in Wrexham Road, one (*Battarbee Bank*) on the site of the former Meadow Vale depot and the other on a field attached to Mount View Farm; *The Wickes* (Cross o' th' Hill Road); and off Old Hall Street a proposed group of retirement homes. Planning permission has also been granted for housing and a new doctors' surgery on land adjacent to the cemetery in Chester Road. It is estimated that all of these developments, when completed, will add around 300 to 400 more residences to the Malpas housing stock.



Because they are being constructed by large regional or national building companies, none of the new developments incorporate features which have a strong connection with traditional building styles in the area. In fact, Malpas has not had a particularly distinctive style since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, something which is also true of many other parts of the country. Even the larger houses built during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries followed a national 'Georgian' style although they used some native materials, such as locally made bricks, or sandstone quarried in the area. The opening of the Llangollen Canal in 1805, with a wharf at Grindley Brook between Malpas and Whitchurch, and the arrival of the railway in



the 1870s, meant that more durable building materials such as the orange-red Ruabon brick and hard-wearing Welsh roofing slate could quite easily be brought into the area. Traditional timber-framed, thatched roof cottages were no longer built much after the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when brick, initially produced locally, had started to become widely available.



*Stoke Cottage* is the centre pair of cottages.  
The thatched cottage on the left is now replaced by a bungalow.  
The cottages (*Welsh View*) on the right were built in 1903.  
Photograph taken around 1906.

Newly married, nearly fifty years ago, Jill and I bought a semi-detached cottage in Church Street, which we named *Stoke Cottage* after Stoke Rochford in Lincolnshire where we first met, adding the cottage next door eleven years later. We live there still. The cottages, brick-built with slate roofs, were possibly built around 1820 although a previous pair of cottages, probably timber-framed, are shown on the same site on a map dated 1805. In our early days here the street was often blocked by flocks of sheep being transferred between pastures; if one drove out around

milking time there was a good chance of being held up by a herd of cows crossing the road from field to milking parlour; and the older men, such as Charlie Barlow, Ben White and Les Boughey, who used to gather outside the Jubilee Hall had many tales to tell of 'Old Malpas'. Nowadays no farmer would risk his sheep on busy Church Street; the number of dairy herds is substantially diminished; and sadly those gentlemen outside the Jubilee Hall have all passed on.

During the next fifty years the town and civil parish of Malpas will continue to change at an even greater rate than at present but that is only to be expected, in these days of widespread car ownership, the ever-increasing power of the Internet, and the benefits, or otherwise, of technological progress. When the first National Census was taken in 1801 the population of Malpas township (now the civil parish) was 906. By the time of the 2001 Census this had grown to 1,628 (in 781 households), an increase of only about 80% over 200 years. Building developments since the 2001 Census could result in an increase of something like 50% in the number of households. When the next Census is taken, in 2021, it will surely reveal very significant changes in the physical and social structure as well as in the population of Malpas. In fifty years' time even that will all just be remembered as part of the town's rich and fascinating history!

## SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This short account has been written in the hope that it will interest both local residents and visitors to the area. It is based on nearly fifty years of research by the author, with acknowledgements to many others who have generously provided him with information in many forms. He is particularly grateful for the help he has received from the staff of Cheshire Record Office; the public libraries at Malpas, Chester and Whitchurch; Dr Paul Booth, Bill Coffin, Professor Nick Higham, Chris Whitehurst, Mervyn Pearson and the late Gerrard Barnes; and many other residents of Malpas and the surrounding area. The main published sources used include those listed below, all of which can be found in Cheshire's public libraries or at Cheshire Archives & Local Studies (Cheshire Record Office), Duke Street, Chester CH1 1RL.

*The excerpts on the first two pages of this short history, from the court case of c.1370 and from the 1281 Malpas market charter, have been transcribed and translated by Dr Paul Booth, from documents held in the National Archives. I am very grateful to him for allowing me to use them in this booklet.*

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## DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

There is a wealth of archive material available for research into the history of Malpas, much of it deposited in Cheshire Archives & Local Studies (Cheshire Record Office) in Chester. The Record Office's website (Google: *Cheshire Archives and Local Studies*) has a link to the on-line catalogue of archives and local studies material, which can be searched by keyword. The main records I have used (with CALS references) are:

P 21        *Records of St Oswald's Church, Malpas*  
 DCH        *Cholmondeley of Cholmondeley collection*  
 DEO        *Egerton of Oulton collection*  
 DTD        *Tyrwhitt-Drake collection*  
 ZRP 10     *Malpas Town Meeting & Malpas Parish Council (1831-1981)*  
 EDT 257   *Malpas Tithe Award c.1841*  
               *Malpas Census Enumerator's Returns 1851-1911 (microfilm)*  
               (the 1841 returns for Malpas are lost)

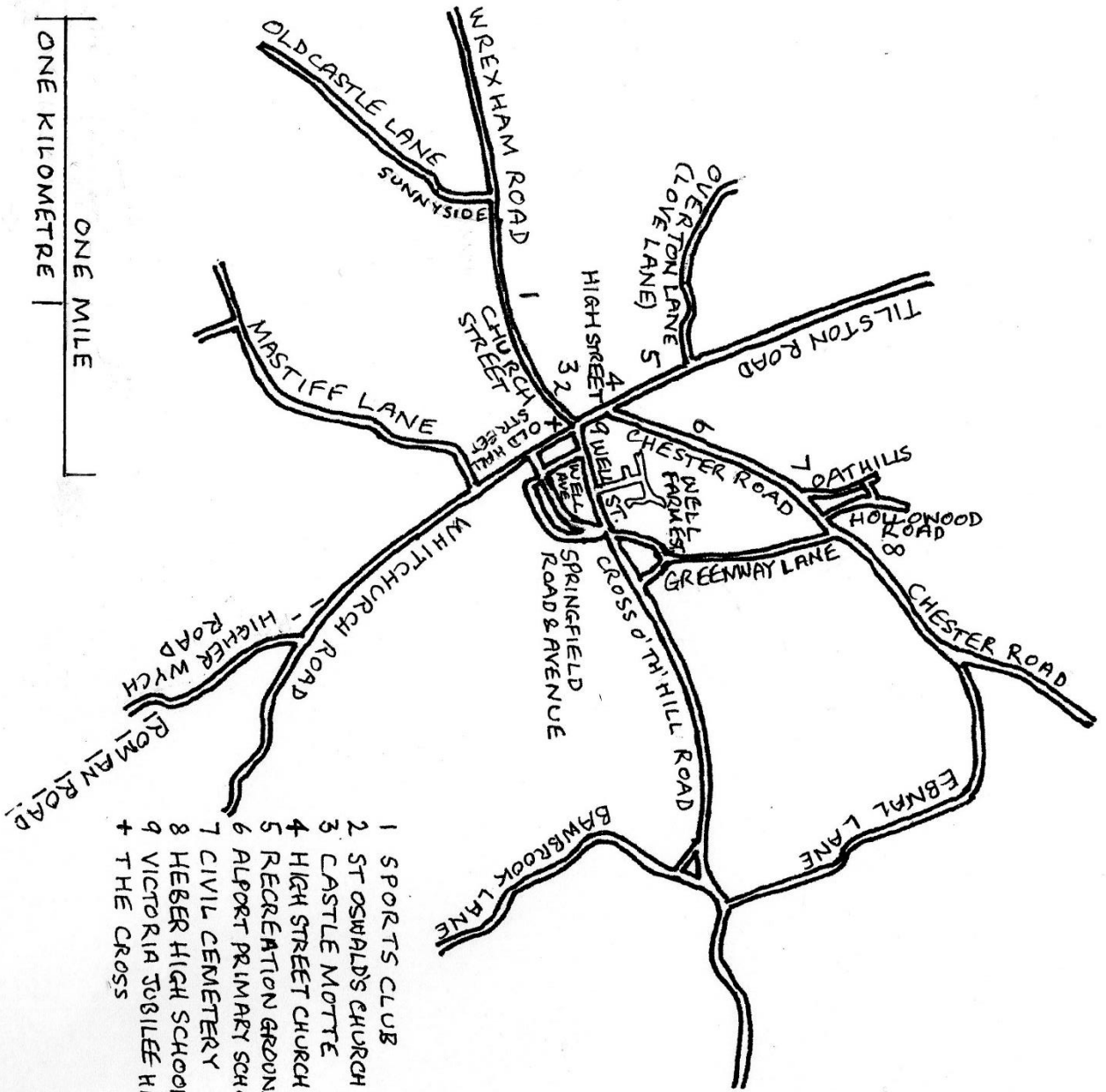
(continued overleaf)

Local newspapers (on microfilm)

*Chester Courant*                      *Chester Chronicle*                      *Cheshire Observer*  
(also *Whitchurch Herald*, 1859-present, on microfilm in Whitchurch [Shropshire]  
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Local Directories

A range of local directories, from *William Cowdroy's Directory of Chester 1789*  
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- 1 SPORTS CLUB
- 2 ST OSWALDS CHURCH
- 3 CASTLE MOTTE
- 4 HIGH STREET CHURCH
- 5 RECREATION GROUND
- 6 ALPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL
- 7 CIVIL CEMETERY
- 8 HEBER HIGH SCHOOL
- 9 VICTORIA JUBILEE HALL
- + THE CROSS